

by R. P. French

The ornithological team consisted of R. P. French, M. French, and C. T. Collins. We were also assisted by various other members of the party at different times. Apart from the mist-netting programme, observations were made on the birds of Grand Fond Bay and valley, and a check-list showing the status of the birds seen and heard during the 48 hour stay is presented.

A summary of the more interesting observations is as follows.

1. From approximately 1830 hours on both 16 and 17 May nightjars could be heard calling all over the forested valley. The calling went on throughout the night until 0530 hours. Sometimes it was so loud and ubiquitous that it was impossible to distinguish the different individuals. The vocalisation may be rendered "chuck, whip — pa — wee — oo", or "Chuck-whip-poor-will", with the first, second and fourth syllables emphasised, and the first syllable half a second ahead of the second syllable. Though no birds were seen, the call is so reminiscent of the *Caprimulgus* species which occur in the U.S.A., (and unlike the calls of any other nightjars which occur in Trinidad), that there seems little doubt that these birds were of the species *Caprimulgus rufus*, the Rufous Nightjar. In this connection it is pertinent to quote Bond's description (1960) of the call of *C. rufus* in St. Lucia as "the accent is on the 4th syllable — Jacques — pas — papa — ou, repeated many times." Bond, however, has pointed out that its status in Trinidad is hypothetical, based only upon the presumed identity of eggs found by Belcher and Smooker (*Ibis* 1936, p. 24). There is no specimen from Trinidad.

N. Andalcio recorded the calls of these nightjars on Monos with his portable tape-recorder, and it is hoped that at some future date we may be able to have them identified by an expert.

C. T. Collins heard this call at the Chaguaramas Naval Base in May 1963, and later compared it with recordings of *C. rufus* from Panama and Venezuela, with which it was identical. Moreover, dark nightjars with no wing-bars have been seen by D. W. Snow, R. P. French and W. N. Howe at Springhill Estate in August 1957, and by R. P. French on El Tucuche in April and May 1964.

2. Between 0550 and 0600 on 17 May calls were heard, reminiscent of the Cayenne Wood-rail, *Aramides cajanea*. They were, however, rather an incisive, loud "pik — pik — pik" etc., or "piok — piok — piok" etc., repeated about 8 times and often answering each other in the manner of rails. The calls were also heard at 1840 hours, and on 18 May at 0730.

On the 18 May we followed the call, which was near the camp, and found a wood-rail in a swampy covert, which answered the description of the Venezuelan Wood-rail, *Aramides axillaris*. Another bird was seen in woodland on the afternoon of 17 May by other members of the Club.

This bird is very rare in Trinidad, not having been identified on the mainland since Belcher and Smooker's time (c. 1935). It was known in Chacachacare in 1942 by Abbott (Herklots 1961), and was seen by M. French on Patos in August 1962.

3. A nest of the Rusty-tailed Titchard, *Mylarchus tyrannulus*, was found by C. T. Collins at 6½ feet in the end of a broken bamboo stump. It contained three small young on 18 May. Details of the nest were sent to Dr. Wesley E. Lanyon of the American Museum of Natural History, who is studying this genus.

A week earlier, on the preliminary survey of the site, R. P. and M. French found two just-fledged young of this species. Catching one, we found that it was harbouring at least 19 larvae of the *Philornis* fly, a parasite which lives on birds, under the skin of the throat, wings and body. Removing the larvae, we released the bird, which flew away more strongly. The larvae were given to Dr. T. H. G. Aitken.

4. A nest with two large eggs was found on 18 May on the top of one of the wooden piles of the old jetty in the bay, some 50-60 yards out from the shore. It was that of a Kiskadee, *Pitangus sulphuratus*. The species sometimes nests in mangrove swamps above water, but much more commonly away from water.

6. At 1200 hours on 18 May Miss E. Molineaux found a nest of the Black-crested Ant-shrike, *Sakesphorus canadensis*, slung on a twig four feet from the ground amid dry scrub and trees. This was about 80 feet above sea level. It contained two young birds, completely void of natal down.

Both parents were in attendance.

THE NETTING PROGRAMME — 16 - 18 MAY

The team used six Japanese 12-metre mist-nets, set at intervals up the Grand Fond valley, in order to trap birds. The large-scale map shows roughly how the nets were set. Nets 1-4 were put up between 1630 and 1730 on May 16. They were left up all night in order to catch possible nightjars. About 0745 on 17 May nets 5 and 6 were set, and at 1745 all six were furled (since much time was wasted with netted bats after the first night). They were reset at 0600 on 18 May and taken down about 1400. At about 0830 that day net 4 was taken down and moved to a new site, where it was called net 7. Thus the total of net-hours (not counting the dark hours of May 16-17) was 124. Altogether 93 birds of 21 species were trapped, two of them twice.

From the data in the accompanying table of measurements etc., the following points are apparent.

1. The Blue Partridge Dove seems to be less rare on Monos than in Trinidad, where we have only occasionally observed it.
2. The White-fronted Dove's occurrence agrees with Belcher and Smoother's observation (1936) that this species of *Leptotilla* occurs in the drier parts of Trinidad, whereas *L. rufaxilla* is found where the rainfall is heavier.
3. All four specimens of the Hairy Hermit were trapped between 0800 and 1025 hours in the same net, which was set close to clumps of Balisier, *Heliconia bihai*, at which this hummingbird is known to feed. Snow and Snow (1963) also found that this species was more often trapped (and therefore probably more active) before midday than after.
4. All six specimens of the Black-crested Ant-shrike were trapped between 1330 and 1550 hours.
5. Leotaud's Dusky Flycatcher is common on Monos. The thirteen birds caught can be divided into those with wings measuring 68-71mm and tails 67-70mm and those with wings 62.5-64 and tails 60.5-63. It seems more than likely that the larger birds are males and the smaller females, though there were no apparent plumage divergencies. Two females collected by Mees (1958) measured 63 and 64 (wings) and 57 and 59 (tails), while a male from British Guiana (Chubb 1921) had wing 73 and tail 76.

6. It is noticeable that of the six House Wrens trapped (one twice) five were in the two nets closest to human habitation.

7. The average weight of the eight Caribbean Vireos is 16.2gm. Snow and Snow (1963) give 14.8gm as average for 8 weights, but unfortunately they do not cite date or precise location.

8. The average weight of the 13 Bananaquits is 10.0gm. Snow and Snow (l.c.) give 9.27gm as average for 55 weights on the island of Chacachacare and 10.50gm as average for 236 weights in Trinidad. We used the same kind of scale and the same methods as the Snows. It seems that Monos might provide a mid-point between these two averages. But the Snows suspected that the Chacachacare birds were actually migrating. Evidently more work on this problem is indicated.

LITERATURE CITED

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TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS ETC. 16 — 18 MAY

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Species	Date	Time	Net	Age/Sex	Wt.	Wing	Tail	Moult
Blue-Partridge	16 May	1900	2	f. pl.	73.5	109	76	Head, back, wing coverts
Dove								
" "	17 May	1345	2	ad m.	67	112	77	Body, 1 tail feather
" "	18 May	1300	1	ad m.	58	109	78	Back, wing coverts
White-fronted	18 May	0815	5	ad	168	139.5	111	None
Dove								
" "	"	0815	3	ad f.	148.5	133.5	105	brood patch
" "	"	1350	6	ad	147.5	131	110	right flank
Hairy Hermit	17 May	0800	3	ad	7.5	63	41	None
" "	"	0850	3	—	7	—	—	—
" "	"	1025	3	ad	8	65	45	None
" "	18 May	1000	3	ad	7	63	46	None
Common Emerald	17 May	0850	3	ad	4.5	51	31	None
Hummingbird								
Black-crested	17 May	1345	1	ad m.	25.5	74	63	Head, body, tail
Antshrike								
" "	"	1430	4	f. pl.	24.5	69	63	None
" "	"	1550	3	ad f.	25.5	71	55	One side of tail
" "	"	1550	4	ad m.	25.5	77	65	slight body
" "	"	1550	6	ad f.	25.5	72	61	1 tail feather
" "	18 May	1330	5	ad f.	23	70	59	None

Rusty-tailed Petchary	17 May	1030	1	ad f.	31	91	82	brood patch
" "	"	1430	1	ad	34	96.5	98	None
Leotaud's Dusky Flycatcher	16 May	1900	1	ad	15.5	70	70	central tail
" "	17 May	0700	1	ad	12.5	71.5	70	None
" "	"	0700	3	ad	13	69.5	70	None
" "	"	0800	3	—	12.5	64	63	None
" "	"	0920	1	ad	15	69	68.5	None
" "	"	1000	4	ad	13.5	63	62	None
" "	"	1100	6	ad	13	68	68	None
" "	"	1550	3	ad	15	68	71	None
" "	"	1550	6	imm	13.5	62.5	60.5	None
" "	18 May	0900	2	imm	14.5	70	67.5	None
" "	"	1330	7	ad	13	63	61	outer tail one side
" "	"	1330	7	ad	13	70	67	None
" "	"	1415	1	ad	13.5	69	69	None
Little Broad- bill	17 May	1030	1	ad	11	55	32	None
" "	"	1100	4	ad	10	56	30	None
" "	18 May	0815	5	ad	10	55	28	None
House Wren	16 May	1900	2	ad	14.5	56	38	None
" "	17 May	1150	1	imm	14	57	39	None
" "	* 18 May	1100	1		14			Recaptured
" "	17 May	1345	2	imm	14.5	53	36	None
" "	18 May	0830	2	imm	13.5	54	44	bcdy, tail
" "	"	0815	6	ad	13.5	55	38	outer tail
" "	"	1300	1	imm	14.5	55	38	head, body, wing coverts

Bare-eyed Thrush	16 May	1900	2	ad	58	110	95	None
" "	17 May	0700	1	ad	66	—	—	None
" "	"	0700	2	ad	75.5	—	—	None
" "	"	0700	3	ad	64.5	114	93	None
" "	"	1430	3	ad	57	112	97	None
" "	"	1745	6	ad	65.5	109	90	None
" "	18 May	0815	5	ad	58	106	96	None
" "	"	0815	5	ad f.	61.5	107	88	brood patch
" "	"	0815	6	ad	56.5	117	92	None
Caribbean Vireo	17 May	1345	1	ad	16	78	57	None
" "	"	1345	1	ad	16.5	72	53	None
" "	"	1345	2	ad	16	68	50	1 tail feather
" "	"	1550	2	ad	15	75	56	None
" "	"	1550	6	ad	16	73	57	None
" "	"	1550	6	ad	18	77	58	None
" "	18 May	0800	2	ad	16.5	74	52	None
" "	"	0940	2	ad	15.5	73	53	None
Red-legged Grampo	18 May	0800	1	f. pl.	13	63.5	37	None
" "	"	1030	7	m.	13.5	63.5	39	Nearly adult plumage Some green on back 4th R Secondary old
Bananaquit	17 May	0700	2	—	9.5	60	36	None
" "	"	0700	3	ad	11	62	39	None
" "	"	0700	3	ad	8	54	33	None
" "	"	1030	2	ad	9	—	—	None

Bananaquit	"	1430	5	ad	11	61	40	None	
"	"	1430	5	ad f.	10.5	55	34	None	
"	"	1430	5	ad	10	58	38	central tail	
"	"	18 May	0940	5		10		Recaptured	
"	"	"	0615	5	ad	10	59	40	None
"	"	"	0930	3	ad	11	57	41	None
"	"	"	0930	6	ad	10.5	55	35	None
"	"	"	1050	3	ad	11	55.5	35	None
"	"	"	1300	1	ad	8.5	55	33	None
Olivascent Warbler	17 May	1550	1	ad	11	62	56.5	None	
Yellow Oriole	17 May	1550	3	ad	47	89	90	None	
Blue Tanager	17 May	1430	5	ad	32	88	68	None	
Parson	16 May	1900	2	ad m.	36	90	77	None	
"	17 May	0700	2	f. pl.	33.5	—	—	head	
"	"	1015	5	f. pl.	33	82.5	74	None	
"	"	1100	6	f. pl.	36	87	78	None	
"	"	1130	5	f. pl.	30.5	84	78	None	
"	"	1345	1	imm m.	35	82	78	None	
"	"	1430	3	ad m	37	87.5	81	slight body	
"	"	1430	5	imm m.	34	91	85	None	
"	"	1700	2	f. pl.	33	85	78	None	
"	18 May	0930	5	f. pl.	36	81	74	None	
"	"	1000	3	f. pl.	34	82	76	None	
"	"	1300	1	f. pl.	35	82	75	throat, tail	
"	"	1415	1	ad m.	34.5	88	81	None	

Grey-breasted Saltator	17 May	1550	2	ad	51.5	101	98	None
Stripe-breasted Saltator	16 May	1900	2	ad	44	89	81	head, body, scapulars
Yellow-bellied Seed-eater	17 May	1430	5	ad m.	8.5	53	46	None
Bull-finch **	17 May	1430	5	ad m.	13	60	56	None
" "	"	1430	5	ad m.	13.5	59.5	58.5	None

(Note. Under Age/Sex f. pl. signifies that the bird was in female plumage but it was not known whether it was a female or an immature male. All diagnosis of immature birds was made on the evidence of the presence of a noticeable orange-yellow "gape" colour at the sides of the closed bill. All weights are in grammes (taken on an accurately-calibrated spring-balance); wing and tail measurements are in millimetres. If the wing was in moult, the longest primary was measured; if the tail was in moult, the full-grown tail-feather nearest to the centre (if any) was measured. The common names are taken from Herklots (op. cit.)

* indicates a bird caught twice in May.

** indicates a bird recaptured in August.)